

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Attachment C

Bobcat Flat Acquisition and Restoration is an opportunity to preserve and restore approximately 280 acres of riparian floodplain on the Chinook salmon spawning reach of the Tuolumne River 12 miles east of Waterford. The project extends along 1.6 miles on the north bank between river miles 42.7 - 44.3. This project extends from the river northward across the historic floodplain. This project is contained within easily recognized boundaries. It is contained on the north by a bluff that rises away, and a high cliff that borders the south bank and the current channel alignment of the river. Therefore, this project covers most of the floodplain between the bluff and the cliff. This project will essentially control both banks of the river due to this arrangement. It has extensive wetlands with river side channels, trees, brush, ponds, and open areas grazed by cattle. The largest threat to this property is the potential for gravel mining that would create deep ponds that are not beneficial to waterfowl. Existing habitat for wildlife and waterfowl would be devastated. The mining would also narrow the floodplain and remove the natural coarse sediment the river has historically meandered through. The river would be confined to a narrow defined channel.

The primary biological/ecological objectives include restoration, reactivation and preservation of ecological processes, habitats, species, and the reduction of stressors. Its habitat complexity and potential for improvement make this project an ideal funding candidate.

This is a phased request for funding. Each phase of the project will determine the funding required to complete the following phase.

After the property is acquired, a conceptual restoration plan will be prepared for public comment. After the conceptual design is finalized, a full restoration plan will be prepared and coordinated with the Tuolumne River Technical Advisory Committee. The plan could include creating shallow ponds for wintering waterfowl, and actions to allow more frequent seasonal flooding. This property is located in the dredger tailings section of the river. The on-sight gravel may need to be partially removed to lower the floodplain. The removed gravel could be used for Chinook salmon habitat restoration.

The budgeted costs are estimated because the property has not yet been appraised and the restoration plan has not yet been prepared. The estimated total cost for acquisition of the 280 acres is \$1,778,000, which is higher than floodplain land lower on the Tuolumne River because these lands have coarse gravel reserves. The restoration plan is expected to range from \$50-\$100,000 based on the initial conceptual design. The higher costs are considered reasonable based on the location (spawning reach) and natural gravel reserves.

No adverse or third party impacts are expected. The project has broad community support. Adjacent landowners do not oppose the project and some are agreeable and supportive.

The Friends of the Tuolumne is a local 501(c)(3) with a strong and experienced Board of Directors. The Board members are professionals who are willing and capable. They are committed to restoring and preserving the Tuolumne River and are working to do so. The

Friends are a signatory to the 1995 FERC Settlement Agreement and participate in the Tuolumne River Technical Advisory Committee. The Friends have strong ties and good working relationships with the agencies in the area, and will be able to draw on these agencies and consultants to bring this project to its full realization.

Monitoring will be designed as part of the restoration plan. Recommendations from California Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and the Tuolumne River Technical Advisory Committee will be considered in plan development. The extent and nature of the restoration will determine the nature and duration of monitoring.

The project is broadly supported locally and by the agencies working on the Tuolumne River through the Technical Advisory Committee. (See attached letter of support A2 and B1 -B10.) Because of its habitat complexity, those interested include fishery, bird, and other wildlife groups.

The project is compatible with CALFED objectives and directly addresses Stream Meander and Natural Sediment Recruitment, Preserves Coarse Sediment Supplies, Natural Floodplain Ecological Processes, Contributes to lowering river water Temperatures, Provides Conditions for Self Sustaining Riparian Vegetation, assists with Species Recovery and Avoidance of future listings, -----all within the Chinook salmon spawning reach.